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REVIEWS

El Sí de las Niñas, por Don Leandro Fernández de Moratín, with notes, vocabulary and exercises by Percy Bentley Burnet. Henry Holt & Co., 1918.

Data collected recently¹ reveal the fact that the present text is one of the most popular books for use in first and second year Spanish classes. The text has already been edited twice in this country, but a work which enjoys such popularity can be edited frequently with profit both to teacher and student. It should, however, be the aim of each new editor to improve on the work of his predecessor, and at the same time to adapt the book to suit existing conditions in the teaching of Spanish, conditions which have changed radically since the first school edition of *El sí de las niñas* appeared in this country.

Although the present editor has been well intentioned, it can not be denied that he has fallen short of his aims. The introduction, which is far too sketchy, affords neither teacher nor pupil the necessary information concerning the life and works of the author and his place in Spanish dramatic literature. The reviewer feels that a well-edited Spanish text should contain more than a modicum of pertinent information. Let us remember that many students of language never read more than one work of an author, and that generally the permanent impressions which are retained are those which appear in the printed volume, a volume which not infrequently finds its way into the owner's library. Let us remember, too, that there are many teachers in secondary schools who have not had the advantages of graduate instruction in Spanish, and who find themselves called upon to teach Spanish, often in a locality where books of reference are not easily accessible. Surely editors of texts which are intended for secondary school use should bear this in mind and prepare their texts accordingly.

To the haste in which text-books in Spanish have been prepared in recent years must be ascribed many of the errors, typographical and otherwise, which are so often in evidence. Teachers of Spanish frequently have misgivings and hesitate to use a new text until they have examined it thoroughly or read a review of the text. Such a situation does not exist in French or German. It should not exist in Spanish. "Better text-books" might well be a slogan for teachers of Spanish.

The edition of *El sí de las niñas*, by Professor Burnet, is relatively free from typographical errors. The following have been noted in the text of the play: p. 15, l. 19, *que* for *qué*; p. 30, l. 2, *Yo* for *Y*; p. 45, l. 14, *El* for *Él* (for the sake of uniformity); p. 54, l. 3, *veniste* for *viniste*; p. 68, l. 18, *Ve aquí* for *He aquí*; p. 78, l. 28, *finjan* for *finjan*; p. 80, l. 9, *él amor* for *el amor*; p. 82, l. 17, *acasión* for *ocasión*; p. 85, l. 16, *para que* for *para qué*; p. 87, l. 11, *¡Que horror!* for *¡Qué horror!*

¹ Cf. *Modern Language Journal*, February, 1919, pp. 226-228.

The notes, which should contain helpful information concerning grammatical difficulties, are mainly parallel instances of constructions taken from other plays of Moratín, and are not especially useful to the average student. Moreover, if a play written more than a century ago is to supply material for conversation (exercises for oral practice occupy 14 pages of the book) it would be advisable to mention obsolete and unusual constructions which occur in the play in order that the student shall not acquire the habit of using them. Some explanation of expressions like the following should appear in the notes: p. 20, l. 2, *Entra Simón al cuarto* (cf. Cuervo, *Apuntaciones críticas sobre el lenguaje bogotano*, 6a ed. Paris, 1914, 417); the same construction occurs p. 25, l. 22, and p. 49, l. 6; p. 41, l. 11, *no le parezca a usted*; p. 66, l. 2, *dió las tres* (modern Spanish has made the object the subject of the verb, cf. *dieron las tres*); p. 83, l. 21, *yo era muy enamorado* (cf. p. 89, lines 7, 14, where the customary verb *estar* is used). One can not always depend on the accuracy of the few notes which the editor has given, and his translations unfortunately do not reflect the Spanish spirit. The reviewer does not wish to repeat here what has already been stated concerning the present edition in the *Modern Language Journal* for May, 1919, but he can not refrain from mentioning the notes to the phrases: *que Dios perdone*, p. 14, l. 19, and *Dios le haya coronado de gloria*, p. 32, l. 12. Of the first the editor says: "Note the comical effect of the phrase used at mention of the dead"; and of the second, "Doña Irene, at mention of the dead, quotes the first phrase that comes to her mind, here with comic effect"!

The book would be improved if the exercises for oral practice as prepared by the editor were omitted. They are frequently incorrect, and smack of translation from the English. The questions themselves are not well adapted for class-room use, for they are often vague and sometimes unintelligible. The student would surely be at a loss to understand the meaning of such a question as, "*¿Diciéndole de señorito a Carlos que manifiesta el señor?*" (p. 130, ex. 17, question 1). *El señor*, which is used with great frequency instead of mentioning the name of the character, suggests *El Señor*. The questions are called in one place "*cuestiones*" (p. 126, ex. 11, question 1). An unpardonable error occurs on page 129, ex. 15, question 19, . . . *al ver que colgan la jaula* . . . It is to be hoped that a careful revision of this part of the book will be made in the near future.

The vocabulary seems to be complete, though it does not always "mark the gender, *m.* or *f.* of all words where it is not clear from the ending or meaning," nor does it contain new words which have been used in the exercises for oral practice. Attention is called to the following words in the vocabulary: *bobería*, nonsense (read *nonsense*); *entrañas*, bowels; *hija de mis* . . . , child of my loins (would it not be better to say, *my darling child?*); *nosotros*, we (also means *us*); *madriña* is listed only under *padriña*; *poner*, . . . , — *en términlos* (read *términos*); *vez*, . . . , *cada*, —, more and more (*Cada vez más* means *more and more*).